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Darting the Liminality: A Phenomenological Reading of Rilke's Poetry

Abstract: Rilke's poetry is an embellishment of transcendence that transmutes the objective experience into an aesthetic one to inhabit a reality of reconfiguration. Caught in that texture of intra-metaphysical realm, Rilke explores a space of circularity that invokes a spatial formation of things to move furtively for a spiritual gain. His diction stresses the importance of phonocentricity over the semantic gesture of language. Re-thinking through the arena of his poems, a more sacred reception can be found which recapitulates both his 'thinking' and poetic dwelling.

Key Words: Transcendence, Unconcealment, Singularity, Open-midst, Intra-metaphysical

Rilke's poetic philosophy articulates the substantial configurations and transforms them into a "positive silence" which does not simply recapitulate its primitive gesture. His diction is trained with such intersection between the world of figures and a space which is extended in its circularity. This is not a way to eliminate what is received but an injunction that dilutes its own constraints to inhabit a 'response' that belongs to an "inner space of the world". Rilke writes with this sense of "darting" which privileges an energy in everything to gain a perpetual equilibrium. The primacy intends to dwell and immediate a leap from the paralleled

formation of things to reconfigure a nameless “midst”. This unrestrained and spooky “midst” enable the poet to outstrip his own calculative realm of manifestation to achieve an intra-metaphysical schema which proliferates an “excess” in everything. Rilke harps on such ‘surplus’ to romance with texture to disentangle himself from the agitated framework of linguistic formations. Poetry, to him, is an inversion of the sphere of recognition, of enframing and association. He engages with a “non-coincidence” that demotes a totalizing gesture and endorses a destitution, negation and “speculative inversion” of objective experience which is co-habitual, trans-cryptal and therefore interlocutory.

The transgressive nature of Rilke’s poetry demands a subtle speculation and a daring intellectual engagement. He likes to be flawed only at the expense of poetic legislature. Commuting through the substantial regulations, he discovers a displacement of ideas. Repudiating the prospect of negative certitude, Rilke restores a robust purity that moves furtively for a spiritual gain. Art has the capacity to transform the organic-objective reality into an aesthetic texture with the magical amulets. One experiences a world of contrast in his poetry to discover a universe of relinquishment, to achieve a tensional balance between a singular stability and the dynamic proportions of things. This dialogical strain of poetic thinking is what storms through the lines of his poems and rends the familiar and the unacknowledged. Thinking endorses in his poetry a sense of interiorisation that consummates into an “interlocution” between different things and promotes a space of emptiness or what is to be called as “Rilkean ball”. It posits a speculation of the “midst” which is transfigural, inviolate and more than meta-organic articulation.

Heidegger provokes this idea of ‘open midst’ or ‘unconcealing midst’ as an “infinite relation”. While, on the other hand, Adorno’s proposition would like to explicate the idea as a “mediated isolation” which is an Event with “indissoluble something” that recurs consequently. My proposition will receive the idea of the “midst” as a pensive heart that

dilutes the Hegelian synthetical nexus and invites a rigorous bending or what Heidegger referred to as “sequestration” (i.e. self-deluding and yet not getting loose of oneself)¹ which drives the ‘thinking experience’ of the poet to reconfigure the thingly world with a sense of completeness. As Heidegger propounded the idea in his essay “The Origin of the Work of Art”:

“In the midst of beings as a whole, there essentially is an open place. There is a clearing. Thought of in terms of beings, it has more Being than beings. This open midst, therefore, is not enclosed by beings; but all beings, rather, encircle the lighting midst itself, like the nothing, which we scarcely know.”

Permeating the idea of the “midst” we discover Rilke’s poetry as retaining a tendency to a “mode of access to questionability” which invites an ‘articulation’ of what is yet to be discovered- a relationality of “factual dialogue”. Such idea of “questionability” surges toward the Heideggerian proclamation of the idea as follows:

“The philosophical interpretation of facticity puts this questionability into effect...it concretely brings the questionability to maturation and maintains it in concretely available directions.”

He continues:

“It is precisely in questioning that factual life attains its genuinely developed self-givenness” (PIA:113).

Rilke would like to be more eloquent in The Book of Hours when he interrogates in the Twenty -Sixth Elegy:

“Alas, where are we? Drifting freer and freer,
like. Kites torn loose from their strings.
We lurch about in midair, frayed by laughter.”

The infinite dwelling of an ontological entity propels maturation which increases the density of mediation into the interpolated state of beings. Our “drifting” is not an existential dispersion that invokes banality instead the interrogation dissolves with the utterance of the word “midair” that actualizes the uncontended certainty which Rilke articulates through the lines of his verse. The apotheosis of such articulation is much apparent in another elegy where he says:

“ Between the stars, such distances: and yet how much vaster
are the distances we learn of here.

Take a child...and next to him, places another-
o how ineffably far.” (20)

And it goes on-

“ All is distance-; and nowhere does the circle close.”

Such expression is provocative when conjoined with the poet’s own idea of the empty “midst” which is obviously more than void or a dynamic dissimulation. This is righteous in the above line where “All is distance” refers not to an eradication, rather it thrusts to the idea of an ostentated proclivity that blurs of what is near and far. As Heidegger explicates the idea of “distance” as-

The distance is not simply eradicated indeed, it exists in the very Being of the relation of care...These are ways life lets itself be transported by the distantiations soliciting it in its world; they are modes in which life cares to establish distance.”(PIA:77:78)

The following expression comports to the Rilkean idea of disfiguration that unconceals everything by essentializing a “completeness” of what is represented. It subdues the calculative infringement and dismantles the spherical revelation which implicates the historiological repercussions. This circularity emancipates the accessibility yet with a

consciousness of interiorization as Rilke pronounced “nowhere does the circle close.” With this obviousness the poet dares to read the words with a poetic silence and dislocates its semantic mutability that obscures what Paul de Man emphasized as an “inner space of the world”(AR). The utterance is explicit in the Eighth Elegy-

Nothing : only the balls. Their glorious arcs.”

This is the Rilkean ball that invites the poet to dwell in the Second Elegy as he mediates with a sprawling heart-

I live my life in windening circles
that drift out over the things.
I may not achieve the very last,
but it will be my aim.”

This is the poet’s “widening circle” that promotes an unrestricted interaction and response to displace the totalizing figuration and invites a renunciation so eclectic and self-identical. The “very last” of this destiny is unknown to him for it ferries across the indeterminate and provides insights to step out the ambiguous outline. The conviction is only achieved through the reconciliation of the wave and matter of thoughts which are correspondingly tailored with a poetic language. He connects the grandeur and sublime of the natural realm with the pure figuration of language that restores a pre-articulated and pre- linguistic silence. The semantic aspects of his poetry promotes another idea where the words are creatively enfolded with thoughts and assert a more natural union and reconfiguration of language meta-structural without an attempt to disintegrating the structural synthesis.

Rilke departs from the limpid ground of description where poetry only imprints an influence; instead he imparts an emptiness into the language that inhabits a “speaking” to stroll along the path of an intra-metaphysical space which defends its own rhetoric of accomplishment.

Discussing the very nature of language, Heidegger invokes the transcending nature which the language has beyond its conditional appellations. He says:

“To reflect on language means- to reach the speaking of language in such a way

that this speaking takes place as that which grants an abode for the being of mortals.” (PLT:190).

To Heidegger expression is always representational of the real and unreal yet Rilke’s accomplishment propounds a purity of language that is unconditional, reciprocal and poetic.

As in the poem “A Walk”, the expression is meditative:

“ My eyes already touch the sunny hill.
going far ahead of the road I have begun.
So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp;
it has inner light, ever from a distance.”

Our liminal existence is only perpetuated by our realization of things and the process of

“worlding” is a transformational course that is spatially constructed yet cannot be grasped.

For Rilke as for Heidegger “poetry is a measuring” in which as Heidegger argues “man first receives the measure for the breadth of his being” (219). Rilke makes a ripple of this

“measuring” to accommodate what is best possible in the track of unravelling. His poetry is about a “dwelling” that imparts a gesture of unbridled poetic joy to gauge the reflection of infinity, purity and the sacred. He loves only to be “non-advent” as Jean Luc Nancy advocates in “La Joie d’Hyperion” :

“But the one of meaning does not arrive. Not that there is no meaning. But the non-advent of the unity of meaning is what alone counts with respect to meaning. May this unique thing survive within meaning unto meaning?”

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